their energies chiefly engrossed in occupying, developing, and defending it. With some marked exceptions, only recently have they begun to look outside for an outlet for their surplus population. Not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did the Chinese go in numbers to Formosa and not until the twentieth did they begin to flood Manchuria.

Certain qualifications, due partly to the natural features of the country, must be noted. Natural obstacles to an integrated country are fully as great as in Western Europe, where they have helped to give rise to separate nations. India, too, with no more formidable internal barriers presents an almost infinite diversity and never until the British forced it on them did all its inhabitants submit to one imperial rule. But for their political genius and the remarkable system of government which they devised, a similar fate might have overtaken the Chinese. Cultural and political unity, while not forbidden by the natural environment, must be ascribed chiefly to the Chinese themselves.

Even with their extraordinarily successful machinery of empire, the Chinese have frequently suffered from temporary divisions which have arisen in part from topography. At best their unity, while marked, is by no means complete. Barriers of hills and of mountains outside the great alluvial plains form obstacles to intercommunication, favor variations in culture, and make difficult the achievement of political empire. It was centuries before the civilized dwellers in the plains of North China could conquer and assimilate their neighbors in the adjoining highlands. In North China commerce and movements of troops must be mostly overland rather than by streams, for the lower course of the Yellow River is obstructed by sediment, and the upper

course—above the juncture of the Wei—is rendered difficult by rapids. Much of the Yangtze, that natural artery of communication, is precarious for traffic, as we have seen, because of the rapids through the hills which separate its lower reaches from the province of Szechwan, and above the gorges the rate of fall renders navigation difficult. The hills and mountains along the south coast and in the Southwest have made these regions somewhat hard to hold and have favored rebellions. Even yet the Chinese have not fully occupied the hills in the Southwest, but for the most part have pushed their non-Chinese neighbors only out of the valleys.